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ART. I.—*The Life of Thomas Jefferson*. By HENRY S. RANDALL, LL. D. In Three Volumes. New York: Derby and Jackson. 1858. 8vo.

THE civil war which has changed the current of our ideas, and crowded into a few years the emotions of a lifetime, has in a measure given to the preceding period of our history the character of a remote state of political existence. We ought to be able to look at it with something like historic impartiality. The better part of mankind will always be attracted by that magnificent spectacle of everything that constitutes the substantial well-being of a community, and will look to those who have witnessed and lived in it for information regarding it. Indeed, as we are ourselves the best explanation and monument of our history, a tolerably faithful record from time to time of our current impressions in regard to the characters and events of the past cannot fail of at least an unconscious truthfulness and value.

Whatever importance is assigned to favorable physical and external conditions, the real difference between our history and condition and that of other nations is to be found in the difference of social and political institutions. The combination we have exhibited of the utmost freedom of action and acquisition with security of possession, and the consequent degree of individual happiness, is possible only because the structure of society is adapted to produce such results. Our political institu-

tions, strictly speaking, being in their nature striking and visible, have attracted special attention. But we incline to the opinion that their share in our national development has been immensely exaggerated. Considering the rapid expansion of interests in this country, the variety of pursuits and the activity of invention and discovery, together with the complaints so general in the early history of the government among ourselves, and since then so assiduously repeated abroad, of the difficulty of engaging the higher class of minds in the public service, we think it evident that politics have engrossed by no means the greater or the better part of our national life. At least in an equal degree with any other people we have a right to complain of the common fate by which all other branches of history are swallowed up in the political.

With this protest we submit to the general law. The examination and explanation of the opinions of Jefferson which we propose, leads us into the heart of American politics. No institution of a political nature has such claims on Americans, in connection with the history of our progress, as that great party with which his name is identified, which first comprehended and expressed the mind of the American people, first gave the government a confident march in harmony with their aspirations, which has controlled it almost without intermission, and whose fatal complication with a particular interest furnished the opportunity for the attempt at its overthrow. The established Constitution and laws are the bones and tissues; they determine the form and furnish the channels through which the national life-blood is poured. Without it they perish and decay. But, as in all vital organisms, while it preserves their existence, it subjects them to constant change. Parties, on the other hand, enlist the active and vigorous spirits of a nation in efforts for some unattained object, always the aim of a more ardent desire than what we have already in secure possession; their history is the history of popular enthusiasm, their movement the measure of what they can impart to the mass.

The character of party-leader was pointedly disclaimed by Mr. Jefferson at the time of his first election to the Presidency. But this declaration is one which at a later period, after he and his followers had risked and accomplished so much, he might

well have revised. High as were the stations he held in the official service of the country, his place in the Democratic party would be the object of a grander ambition. Here he was the object, not only of more than obedience, but of a reverence and devotion surpassing party fealty. Not only during his lifetime, but for more than a generation after his death, his lightest opinions were studied and regarded with a religious veneration singularly at variance with our national tendencies, as well as with the sturdy independence of his own character. Merit apart, they still stand for authority with that large class to which authority is a necessity. Nor can merit be denied to that system which gave rise to so long and successful an administration of the government, nor, above all, can political power be denied to ideas which have stamped themselves so deeply on the intellect of the country as to lead to that political habitude and that incapacity to escape beyond their charmed circle of which we of this generation have seen such striking manifestations.

Different minds and two schools of writers are divided upon the point whether the great movements of society are traceable to the guidance of individual minds, or to the unconscious gravitating tendencies of the whole. All, however, may unite in the recognition of Jefferson's greatness. Every possible influence seems to have been exerted by him, that of oratory alone excepted. On the other hand, by a curious felicity too deep for calculation, and apparently attributable to innate sympathy or instinct, he was always, from the beginning to the end of his career, in the midst of the most shifting and uncertain circumstances, on the winning side and the representative of the prevailing opinion, — or at least of that opinion which was going to prevail. Regardless of momentary aberrations, and disdain-ing the inferior ground of mere argument, he trusted in the impulse of the popular heart. Whether creating the current or borne along in it, he and it were equally in unison.

This fact is the more important in the case of Jefferson, inas-much as, after playing a principal part in the overthrow of the old government, he became more prominent than any of his contemporaries in finally settling the policy of the new. Few indeed have been, like him, eminent in those widely different capacities. It is with the latter department that we are princi-

pally concerned. And the fundamental ideas of the Democratic party cannot be better elucidated than by disclosing their origin in the mind of Jefferson.

With this purpose in view, we shall have but little opportunity within our limits for a general estimate of his character and actions. This alone, and not a want of sense of their merit and importance, precludes us from giving a grateful testimony in favor of his eminent public services, of his abilities proved in so many departments of business, of his capacity in the wide field of philosophy, statesmanship, and speculation, and of his strong and in the main honorable personal character, which seems to shine like a beacon-light over the heads of his successors.

The course of events has given a particular prominence to three subjects, or three branches of one subject, of a political nature, with which he had to deal : —

I. The powers of the Federal Constitution, and the relation to it of the several States ;

II. Extension of the national territory ; and

III. Its possible division.

I. The idea has been sedulously inculcated for political purposes, that the Convention which met to form the Federal Constitution was perfectly free from all existing obligations as to the course it was to pursue, and that the result it wrought was due to nothing but the original unbiassed judgment and superior wisdom of its members. This position is necessary to support the claim that the system of government they formed was of a purely original character. It is not surprising that many of those who composed that Convention should have been unconscious of reasons which had in reality the force of compulsion upon the determination of the questions submitted to them. No constraint is so absolute, and at the same time so imperceptible, as that of ideas which pervade the whole community. The Constitution appeared to them to be entirely their own work. But in truth probably no scheme of government was ever elaborated in which so little was left to the caprice or personal choice of its immediate authors. The Convention was the creature of a general popular movement. The people of

the thirteen Colonies, lately become States, were determined to confirm and secure the union which the previous confederacy had notoriously proved itself incompetent to maintain. But in each State there was already a government in full operation. It was the only government known, and had complete possession of the field. The people were everywhere attached to it, and had no idea of putting it at risk by having its operation disturbed. The thirteen State governments themselves had also as little intention of abdicating. Connected with them were the men of note in every State, who looked to them as a field of advancement and distinction. How important were these influences may be discerned by the course of events in regard to the adoption of the Constitution by the States. The Convention came together and acted in the main in a consolidating sense. If it had anything to do this was it, — to draw tighter the bonds of union. This is the thesis of the Federalist on this point, — that union is necessary, and that it is provided by the Constitution. But when the proposed system came to be debated before the Conventions of the separate States, — in Virginia and New York for instance, — it was attacked on the ground that the work had been overdone, and the new system of government savored too strongly of centralization. The reply by the friends and authors of the Constitution was a denial of this charge, and the exposition of the unimpaired autonomy of the States. So that, in fact, it was framed for consolidation, and adopted because it did not consolidate. To make assurance doubly sure, it was made in effect a condition of the adoption that certain amendments in the *un-consolidating* sense, one of which in particular has been since the hobby-horse of the State Rights party, should be carried along with it, and they were accordingly passed at the first session of Congress.

These facts make it evident how narrow was the field of action of the Convention, and how little it was its own master. It was both urged on and held back by outside pressure. The people of the United States, acting together and therefore under the prevalence of ideas of union, supplied the main action and prescribed the plot; the same people acting as separate States, and therefore under different influences, criticised the piece

and finally accepted it. The writers were held to a strict account. Nothing was permitted to depart too far from existing political traditions. Under these conditions, the place of every public man was determined in advance by his habits, his associations, and natural turn of mind.

Jefferson's public life is divided into three distinct periods, — that preceding and during the early stages of the Revolution, his residence abroad, and that after his return. The approaching separation from Great Britain was heralded in the Old Dominion by perhaps the most remarkable change, its manner and rapidity considered, that ever took place in a political body, — that from an aristocratic to a democratic form of government. Jefferson's entrance into political life was identified with this powerful revolution, his subsequent course was deeply affected by it. So far as the work of organization went, he had a greater right than any other to look upon the regenerated commonwealth as the work of his hands, and in return he was ever the darling of her heart. Apart from other considerations, such a relationship could not fail to produce on him the most favorable impressions regarding the State governments in general. In addition to this, in trying the first experiment of Union the Confederate Congress was hardly more than a committee to give expression to public sentiment, and still it had borne with success the highest strain to which any government can be subjected, — that of carrying on war.

With these things in mind, Jefferson assumed the embassy to France, and necessarily, under the difficulties of communication at that time, severed his connection with the changes of public opinion at home. The general movement brought about in the course of the war and at its end in favor of a closer union, could not have been felt by him in its full power. Though on the whole an interval of leisure in his busy life, his residence abroad was destined powerfully to affect his opinions, and it is not too much to say his country and the world. Coming with a great reputation from the country which was the fashion at the moment, the doors of society were thrown open, and he was received into intimate association with the first minds of the French capital at one of the most exhilarating periods in the history of the world. In this intercourse there

was no cause for a feeling of inferiority on his part. If he met with a higher cultivation and a more universal philosophy than his own, the knowledge he contributed of practical politics and experience in revolutionary crises was at least of equal value. But the deepest impression on his mind was not the result of association with learned or courtly circles. The cottages and workshops, and the daily life of the peasants and people, were the chosen field of his studies; and in several extended journeys he acquired a knowledge of the condition of European society, and of the actual working of the different governments, equalled by few travellers. By this examination all his original ideas in favor of popular institutions were not only confirmed and expanded, but his mind was filled with a mingled feeling of indignation and horror at the misery he everywhere encountered. The institution of monarchy, the governing classes, and the whole machinery of oppression, became the objects of the intensest detestation. No words but his own can convey a notion of this feeling. He speaks habitually of the Continental nations as composed of "sheep and wolves," and deliberately declares "that it would be better that the race of man should be reduced to a single pair, like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, than to go on suffering what they endure from their governments." His sympathies were of course warmly enlisted on the popular side in the opening scenes which he witnessed of the French Revolution, while his tastes and affections, touched and won, as they might be still, by the amenity and practised kindness of the French, ever afterward pleaded strongly in their favor.

In the mean time his native country was preparing a new model for governments, and a new aspect of civilization. The short and dangerous apathy which followed the Revolutionary war had passed, and the Federal Constitution arose at the voice of the people. Jefferson returned to take a place in the Cabinet of General Washington, and to become the leader of that policy which was finally to prevail in the administration. His diaries and correspondence give a fair picture of his own views and of the general state of affairs. All political subjects connected with the general government were open questions. Every one followed what seemed good in his own eyes. For

once, at least, in our history, there was neither tyranny of the majority nor subserviency to party policy. Even on the question of the adoption of the Constitution itself, which had just been determined, the best men of all parties and the truest patriots were divided in opinion. Jefferson's own opinion had wavered between an immediate adoption and a postponement. In common with everybody else, he found things in that instrument to be admired, and others which would be the better for a change. In common with everybody else, he said so. People disagreed as to what ought to be altered and what maintained, nor was there any authority in a settled construction or in public opinion which as yet asserted a claim to superior attention. There is no reference to be found for years in Jefferson's writings to constitutional decisions or to a standard of party faith. Such expressions as "the true friends of the Constitution," "the pure republican doctrine," creep in slowly.

Such an anarchy of opinion could not endure. The government which was to arise out of it must be the government of the strongest idea, the ruling tendency of the nation. As to the Constitution which had just been launched on such an uncertain sea, without the support of the custom or tradition of a moment, it could not pretend to control the course of events. Few politicians accepted it as a finality, and the paramount question in relation to it was to what does it lead? Looking back at the steady march of democratic triumph, it appears at this time that there was never a foothold for monarchical institutions among us. In our day such inclinations, whenever they have ventured into the light, have been only a laughing-stock entertained by no one above the dignity of a *petit-maitre*. Such was not always the case or the appearance. Notwithstanding the political separation, the popular habits, associations, and education were mainly English. The mass of lawyers and politicians knew nothing beyond the circle of English ideas; if by any chance they had imbibed other notions, the people were not prepared to receive them. The many injuries inflicted, the daily insult renewed in the retention of the frontier posts at the hands of the British government, were insufficient to overcome the sympathy of race. The weight of historical example since the days of Greece and Rome seemed to

open no avenues, except through monarchical institutions, to that security and good order which after the storms of war were the universal demand. For other reasons besides the unlimited confidence in the administration of Washington, the opponents of the Constitution were unwilling and unable to criticise its first steps. For a short time it was a government without an opposition. If this was to endure, the issue was certain under whatever forms it might be veiled. Perhaps under republican forms a monarchy in fact might be more impreguably intrenched. The administration was not long in showing signs of the tendency to aggrandizement natural and inevitable in such circumstances. Personal ambitions had their effect in the same direction. The United States functionaries, engaged in duties new to themselves and to the people, imagined themselves superior to the rest, and inclined to a concert of official action. It is certain that occupants of its highest posts calculated privately the duration of the government. Society was more outspoken. It is impossible to refuse assent to such specific testimony as that of Jefferson, who declares that, to his astonishment, on his return he rarely heard in the society of Philadelphia and New York, except from some government official, an expression in favor of republican principles, and that the prevailing tone was entirely monarchical. The Federal government, it is true, was elective; but its functions were new, and what is new is apt to be uncomfortable. From the nature of the case they must have been mainly an affair of the office-holders. So that it is easily understood how it soon came to represent the principle of authority, while the course of popular institutions was identified with the State governments, to which the people were accustomed. A Federal triumph could have been nothing short of the triumph of political organization over popular sentiments and traditions.

Against these things his whole soul revolted. Filled with one overwhelming sentiment, the hatred of monarchy and the determination that the curse of other lands should never desolate his country, the state of opinion, the acts of the government, and the projects of some of the political leaders, left no doubt on his mind of the prevalence of an intention, too widespread for a conspiracy, of the subversion of the republic. With-

in a few months he begins, and thenceforth continued to speak of those with whom he differed as the monarchical party, as decisively as if this was the point of an open political canvass. With him there was no other distinction of consequence besides that of monarchists and republicans. He was far from being of that temper of mind to yield without a struggle. But despite his great reputation, his position was singularly isolated. His residence in France had emancipated him almost alone among our statesmen from the prejudices of an English education. It is a proof of no common strength of mind, that he withstood the temptation to betray the contempt of a superior cultivation for the narrower range of ideas within which the destiny of the country was to be decided. Helpless as a member of the administration to restrain the government on the path it was entering, and oppressed by the loneliness of his situation in the Cabinet, he was forced to look abroad for support. The only efficient check to authority is in the spirit and energy of the people. Had he been driven to that necessity, it would probably have been a hopeless attempt, in the then condition of the country, to appeal directly to an unorganized resistance. In such cases success is revolution and anarchy, and of these the people had had enough. But the double nature of our institutions then, for the first time, enabled him to take up a vantage-ground of opposition. The State governments were, what the general government was not yet, in immediate connection and full sympathy with popular impulses, and afforded the organized means of operations, without any of the dangers of irregular opposition. Here Jefferson made his main stand. In the midst of an abundance of popular agitation, he evoked the more authoritative voice of the State legislatures, commencing with that of Virginia and of Kentucky, then almost a dependency upon her parent State. Occasions were not hard to find. The exercise of authority by two organizations on the same soil puts them by political instinct at variance, and on this question the general opinion was decisively on the side of the States.

For the manner of organizing the first opposition, and carrying on the first political campaign against the administration, the highest and most grateful credit is due to Jefferson. Then

in its early weakness it was to be decided whether the government was to be administered and assailed within the boundaries of law and civil peace, or with violence and lawlessness. The contest was so conducted that even in victory, when the policy and direction of the government were completely changed, none of its forms were violated, and the attachment of the people not only confirmed to their ancient institutions, but secured to the new. Such a success is the highest proof of wisdom and policy joined hand in hand with the most elevated ideas of duty. Of all governments only one—that of Virginia and her sister States—had been found worthy of Jefferson's approval, because those alone were formed to secure the well-being of their citizens. Standing erect through all the convulsions of the times, they had shown themselves possessed of the elements of stability and of a capacity for indefinite improvement. With hopes for the future of mankind, and an idea of the dignity of human nature, then, it may be believed, more rare than now, at stake in the issue, no considerations could have justified, in his view, the subordination of those approved institutions to the unpromising experiment of administrative consolidation.

We do not propose to follow the steps of the contest. Notwithstanding unfounded charges of proscription, Jefferson's moderation in victory long softened the rudeness of party strife. His success assured the popular liberties, and opened the subsequent career of the United States. Of course it is impossible to say what it might have been, or what unknown dangers were escaped, but there is one fatal necessity that lies in wait for nations,—that of making a choice between order and internal peace and the sacrifice of freedom. In this case both were saved. The first Presidents were inaugurated with such pomp and ceremony as the invention, or perhaps the humor, of the country would admit. When Jefferson rode alone through the streets of Washington, and tied his horse with his own hands to the railings of the Capitol to deliver that Inaugural Address whose phrases are a part of American speech, a new era commenced. He undertook to administer the government; not to extend, but to restrain its powers within the narrowest limits of national safety. If the surrender of great power is so much

easier, as it is said to be, than its temperate use, this was an act of heroism which has not received its due meed of praise beside the celebrated resignation of Washington.

In speaking of the extension of the authority of the States, which was the germ of the Democratic party, as a measure of policy, adopted by Jefferson in view of an immediate danger, and because it was in accordance with popular traditions, we have not forgotten that elaborate scheme of Constitutional doctrine to which submission has been claimed as to the faith delivered to the saints. That party became a magnificent creation, inferior to no organization that ever existed in all appliances for acting on the popular mind, with an expansive and all-embracing faith, an uncompromising discipline and devotion, which has had much to do in preparing the way for that sentiment of national unity which now presents one of the most remarkable exhibitions that has appeared in history. But we are following at present the course of Jefferson's ideas. The evidence now accessible is contained in his correspondence and contemporary writings. And so far from the whole democratic theory having been derived in the first instance from an understanding of the Constitution, or from having sprung full-armed from his brain, he is entirely silent in regard to a compact between the States when the subject first comes under discussion. His criticism of the Constitution and his objection to it are founded on another ground. This was the absence of a Bill of Rights,—an objection so deeply seated in his mind, that it seems to have been surrendered only through lack of sympathy among a practical people. Now a Bill of Rights applied to sovereign states is an absurdity, and the stress laid on it shows that the relation established by the Constitution between the governing power and the individuals under its sway was the paramount consideration which then occupied his thoughts. Nor did he even give any countenance to that party which, when the Constitution was under discussion in the State Conventions, and particularly in Virginia, under the lead of Patrick Henry, contended that it ought to form simply a league between different sovereignties. It was not until after the necessity of a check upon the central supremacy had been demonstrated in fact, that its friends declared it to be what its

enemies had maintained that it ought to have been. The doctrine also of the Virginia Resolutions, when they first make their appearance in the correspondence of Jefferson and Madison, by no means presents itself with the firmness of an established belief, but rather as something important to be established, a thesis to be proved.

There is abundant evidence to show that the early Democratic doctrines, instead of being mere closet speculation, grew with the party out of the requirements of the times. In fact, its measures preceded its distinctive principles. This is not to declare these the less true, but the more so. For it should be recollected that the Constitution was and remains essentially dual, including the two principles of subdivision and of union. When either predominates, it is but shifting the weight to one end of the beam. As long as it reflects the spirit of an active people, such fluctuations will occur. In every such movement there is a tendency to correct itself. Political wisdom consists in aiding and directing all favorable circumstances to this end. As men are so much quicker to appreciate what is to their advantage than what is true, it would appear that in practical politics measures take precedence of principles. Indeed, their beneficent influence is capable of correcting the principles by the aid of which they are carried, and to eliminate from too general a statement what merely belongs to variable conditions. According to the character of his mind, Jefferson was not slow to cast his ideas into the form of a system. This is set forth in brief in the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798, written by him or under his immediate inspiration. To the development of their doctrine of State rights and local self-government, the remainder of his political life was devoted, and upon it will depend his reputation as statesman and philosopher. If in the application he mistook the circumstances of his own times for necessary and universal conditions, this is only a part of human infirmity. In a candid estimate, his position as a party leader ought also to be taken into account. Unquestioning faith among masses, the most powerful engine of government, is only to be secured to doctrines promulgated under all possible sanctions.

After an ascendancy longer than the lifetime of most govern-

ments, the name and principles of Jefferson are now in danger of discredit, in consequence of evils attributed to them, and of the traitorous actions they have been invoked to defend. We shall have occasion to speak more at large of his general philosophy, and at present are not inclined to quarrel with the logic which draws from it the whole doctrine of nullification and secession. This is all beside the issue; the springs of political movements do not lie in argumentative demonstrations. The logic of events is the only kind by which statesmen are guided or nations disturbed. Pretences are never lacking for evil designs; nor do political errors, without the spur of interest or ambition, precipitate revolutions. Their final cause is in the future, not in the past. None of these evil consequences occurred during Jefferson's life. What antidote his statesmanship may have contained is undisclosed; but his success in discovering one for those of his own day is a favorable augury of what he might have done in ours. That he was no devotee to any political system as a panacea of universal application, is evident from his counsel to the French reformers to be satisfied with the concessions of the King, even before the meeting of the States-General, as sufficient for the time, as well as by his distrust of the capacity of the South American states for republican institutions.

II. Extension of territory. Never were professed maxims more promptly put to the test. The course of European politics had put the resources of France under the control of one man, and among them the vast possession of Louisiana. The acquisition of this territory, together with the command of the mouth of the Mississippi, was felt to be a necessity as vital to the physical development of the nation as its continued possession has since been regarded. Jefferson's despatches had given it to be understood by the government of France, that upon the retention or relinquishment of this colony depended the virtual alliance of this country with England or France. Suddenly the First Consul proposed to cede it upon the payment of fifteen millions. Every consideration of national policy dictated the prompt acceptance of the offer. But one objection stood in the way. All the powers not expressly ceded to the Federal government remaining vested in the several States,

and no authority to acquire territory having been granted, of course none existed to conclude the treaty. In these circumstances, Jefferson hinted at an alteration of the Constitution, but obtained the cession. Some explanation was necessary. The explanation offered was to the effect that, there being no question of the advantage of the bargain, there could be none as to its acceptance. It was merely the case of an agent anticipating the certain instructions of his principal. Whether such an exercise of ingenuity avoids the recognition of the fact that the forms of government are in their nature indefinable, may still be a question. We have heard nothing more of a change of the Constitution. The question has never been submitted to the people. The practice of the government has as effectually altered or defined the Constitution, as could any act of theirs. Still those who have profited the most by this departure from their own principles, who by means of it alone attained a despotic rule, would have departed still more widely from the nature of party, if they had not constantly appealed to the inviolability and immobility of the Constitution for its continuance. Once admitted, no serious question as to the government of the territory arose until the admission of Missouri. At that time Jefferson had long been living in retirement at Monticello, surrounded by pleasant neighbors and admiring worshippers; resistance to the universal current of his Southern associations was not to be expected. However interesting the conversation or valuable the reflections of a retired statesman in the decline of life, Nature asserts her prerogatives and recollection supplies both the pleasantest and the most profitable exercise of the faculties.

III. Disunion. In undisturbed satisfaction at the success of his policy and the prosperity of the country, he loved to cast a prophetic glance into the mystery and grandeur of the future. No keener eye had anticipated its revelations. But the vision of a united nation stretching from ocean to ocean was too vast to engage his confidence, or even his hopes. During his active career, it was in New England that the phantom of disunion had reared, or appeared to rear, its head; and it was only in relation to his opponents that he had been called to regard it. There are expressions in his earlier references to this sub-

ject which seem to contain the idea of a resort to force, in case of such an attempt, soon subsiding, however, into the repeated declaration of a well-grounded confidence that all such projects could be disposed of in no way so summarily and effectively as by vote of the people. The treatment of Burr shows what reception they met with when directed against the unsettled parts of the territory. In no actual case did he ever countenance the idea or place himself in any position except that of unqualified support of the Union. In the speculations of his later years, however, the difficulty of accommodating such vast spaces and populations under one government made him contemplate the possibility of division. But alas for the vaticinations of prophets! That great river which, as the outlet of a continent, proves the strongest bond of union, was to be the dividing-line between the people who should dwell along its banks and throng its head-waters. The separation presented no terrors to his imagination. Instead of being the work of discord at the bidding of cupidity and pride, and attended by the horrors of war, it was to be an act of general consent, and in itself the highest confirmation of popular rights. Like a convention of philosophers, the people of the two sections were to meet and part without a heart-break or the sacrifice of anything worth a moment's regret. This was the last result of the Jeffersonian philosophy, the picture of its political millenium. Without pretending to have reached a state nearer perfection, we shall endeavor to show, before we have done, the omission of what elements of human nature from his calculations, and what mistakes in the teachings of history, led to so lamentable an error.

There is another subject, the gravest in our national existence, upon which Jefferson's opinions are often discussed. Placed throughout his life in a situation to observe the effect of slavery in both its moral and political relations, a decisive and important conclusion might have been expected from him. No stronger declarations against its injustice have ever been made by man than those so often quoted from his pen; and the truthfulness of his observation is exhibited by the denunciation, in advance of any other observer, of its greatest evil in its influ-

ence upon the master and the education of children. But the Notes on Virginia, where these sentiments are found, were prepared and published in Europe, where certainly they could not operate against him, and where the expression of such ideas was the necessary defence of the commonwealth he was seeking to recommend against a charge which already dampened the enthusiasm of the friends of America. Not that there is any doubt as to his early opinions. The alterations in the draft of the Declaration of Independence are well known. Nor are we aware of any evidence that these opinions, in the abstract, as the phrase is, were ever changed. But we fear it must be acknowledged that, in the course of a life occupied with other things, and in obedience to political expediency, they passed into the class of luxuries and ornaments never intended for use. Between the time of his first intimate connection with Virginia and his residence there after his Presidency, the change of Southern feeling had begun. Instead of excusing, the Southern States embraced the institution. The active business of this later period of his life was the completion of the plan of free education for the citizens of Virginia, which he had conceived before the Revolution. With much mouth honor, but with little real support, and that accorded to his personal claims, the University of Virginia, the department intended for the highest studies and the richest class of students, and which he regarded as only the capital of the edifice, was established at Charlottesville. But the provision to which he was most devoted, for the education of the poor, failed, evidently in consequence of the state of society induced by slavery, and the impossibility of co-operation in the body of the people. He accepted the defeat without attacking the cause, leaving the remedy to the labors of a younger or future generation. His speculations on the removal of the evil were at all times based on the necessity of the expatriation of the blacks on account of the assumed impossibility of the peaceful occupancy of the same soil by two races upon terms approaching equality. As the impossibility of dispensing with the productive labor by which the whole community is supported is at least equally evident, all such speculations may be dismissed as futile.

Leaving these points, we shall devote a few words to his gen-

eral views of the science of government. His line of action was determined at an early period by the circumstances of the times, the temper of youth, and the impulse of personal character, and it was never essentially varied. Few public men have ever led so consistent a career. Notwithstanding the temptations of a life spent in official stations, his steady aim was to diminish the powers of government and enlarge the freedom of the individual. The ideal and favorite system of his thoughts was something so remote from authority, that it is hardly too much to deny him the conception of an ideal of government. We have both his own declaration and evidence stronger than that to the effect that nothing but some invasion of liberty and natural rights ever induced him to mingle in political affairs and step forth in their defence. With him government exists for the sake of the governed, and their good is attained when each is left free to go his own way. Natural rights are always rights of the individual, never of the community, from which they are always in danger. The restraints rendered necessary by living in society are best when reduced to the lowest limit.

It so happened that his advocacy was enlisted in behalf of popular claims, which were only to be carried by the union of many against the few in unjust possession; and hence in his writings there is frequent reference and appeal to the people. But the democracy of Jefferson can never be reckoned in aid of the tyranny of the majority. An attack from any quarter upon individual liberty of thought and action finds in him an equally determined opponent. From the people, however, and from the rights of man, he naturally believed such an attack impossible. To him its own business is the chief business of government, and to see that it is done the first affair of the citizen. When private rights are secure, there can be no interest in which all do not share. A government can have none of its own, and becomes the expression of the prevailing sentiment. Above this there is nothing. Within its sphere there is no appeal to anything higher than the popular will. The nearer it approaches the source of authority, the more perfectly the functions of government are performed. In the large communities of nations, universal interests are to be treated by the people as a whole,—those of its subdivisions separately by each; and the smaller

the organization, the more immediate the impression of the individual mind, the more complete was the realization of his idea. From the great concerns of nations, and problems of statesmen which, by their nature, are removed from the understanding and immediate interests of the people, he turned in preference to the spectacle of the working of village democracies. No political machinery impressed him with such admiration of its excellence as that of the New England townships, and there is no power of which he speaks with so much dread as this, which he says forced him when President to abandon the policy of his administration. With an ardor which the grander display of national politics entirely failed to elicit, he pursued the project of introducing a similar organization into Virginia under the name of Hundreds, and almost despaired over its failure.

With so exact and comprehensive a thinker, political principles are only a fragment of a philosophical system embracing the moral and social relations of men, and constructed according to the received laws of thought. Jefferson's philosophy has been ascribed to French influence, but references to French authors are not frequent in his writings, nor does he seem to have been acquainted with them at a time when his principles were fixed. As the French philosophy of the eighteenth century is generally conceded to be an offshoot of the preceding English speculations, the coincidence of Jefferson's opinion appears rather to be that of an independent deduction. The same feature which characterizes his political system belongs also to the philosophy of Locke and his school in all its applications. Its method, by which consciousness, instead of the experiment and observation on which other sciences depend; is made the subject of investigation, brings into prominence the operations of the individual mind; and if we look to results, the sturdy individualism of England and America appears to be its most remarkable product. Following its method, it would seem that, when the operations of one mind—and that one's own—are understood, then all minds are known; when one's own duties and relations are determined, those of a whole society are included. That men are made to live in society, is a fact too plain to be denied, but the point of connection it is difficult to discover. In all cases the analysis of thoughts, motives, and

actions is carried to the point where personal requirements are satisfied, and no further; if there is anything else, it is omitted. Man in a state of nature, if not at war, is at least not in fellowship with his kind. The theory of the social compact by which political rights were regulated, places men like grains of sand in juxtaposition, but without affinity. For that deeper law of duty and of unity which even with the most superficial and self-absorbed is still the basis of all human intercourse, there is hardly a place in the system; and accordingly the theories of morals seem far more like attempts to account for its existence, than to declare and develop the primal law of association between human beings.

To this school, which bore undisputed rule for a hundred years wherever the English language was spoken, and which, whether cause or effect, is the mirror of the Anglo-Saxon mind, Jefferson belonged by natural selection. If it had not existed, he must have invented something like it for himself. In some indefinable way personal character is a law to opinion. A patient and self-reliant will, a temper capable of being heated to a white heat without escaping control, a mind and heart both able to make or find their own enjoyments,—it is to qualities like these, which were united in him, that this train of thought is suited. Locke was his master in philosophy; and to him, along with Bacon and Newton, he paid a somewhat ostentatious reverence as the chiefs of the human intellect. In all directions his speculations were marked by the same tendency to individualism which we have noticed in his politics. The proposition of the inability of one generation to bind another to the payment of debts or the observance of treaties, is but a natural and logical consequence of the groundwork of his reasonings. His best and most serious thoughts were given to moral subjects; but they led to no further theory of morals than this, that benevolence is the instinct of good men, who receive pleasure from conferring good on others. This is a fact, but neither a reason nor a generalization.

His personal habits and condition in life were brought into accordance with his principles, and added their weight to the strength of his convictions, which is what can be said of few philosophers. In theory, the agricultural state is taken to be

the most favorable to independence and the robust virtues; accordingly he was himself a farmer, and looked with a distrustful eye upon manufacturing industry and its concentration in towns. No influence is so potent as that of money in the framework of modern society, which depends upon capital and credit for its daily bread. These are also eventually dependent, and not always easily distinguishable. Not only so, but the condition and advance of any people at the present time is pretty accurately measured by its financial system. Constantly creating new relations and binding all nations more closely together, commerce and credit are justly regarded as indispensable instruments of the actual civilization. Now all the mysteries of credit not only were unintelligible to Jefferson, but suspected by him, and his dislike extended to the persons and classes by whom financial operations are transacted. This was undisguisedly declared regarding merchants, and the creation of an American debt was the occasion of the gravest distrust of the republicanism of Hamilton. Personally he had laid it down as a rule never to allow himself to make any pecuniary profit out of operations in stock, or generally in any way except as a farmer; and as he professedly never studied the subject of public credit, it is no injustice to ascribe his aversion to its use in any form to the same spirit that influenced his private conduct.

In comparing the general tone of thought which we have set forth as belonging to Jefferson, in common with his school; with that which now prevails, we think this distinction is to be observed. For the last half-century the effort of reason and of science, as applied to what was formerly matter of speculation, has not been contented with resolving phenomena into separate elements, but has sought out the law of their unity and higher generalizations to connect them together. Those metaphysical theories which remove the human conscience from the domain of the understanding, extinguish individuality by absorption in the universal reason. Everywhere this great truth is acknowledged, that, if men exist as individuals, mankind is a society. The diversities of that complex organism are too vast to be unfolded in a single breast. New methods of inquiry, looking outwards rather than inwards, the accumulation and compari-

son of statistics, have thrown a new light upon the past, and upon human nature itself. The rewriting of history which those discoveries have necessitated has been directed to the elucidation of the great movements, whether of populations or of ideas, which have included large portions of the human family. Among the foremost appear the fact and the laws of the origin and growth of nationalities. Continued association under favorable conditions is powerful enough to fuse even the diversities of race, and to create a new birth,—the genius of a nation. The universal misery and oppression over which Jefferson groaned in spirit is a witness, not only to the reckless abuse of power, but to the universal tendency to combination. It has its compensation too in the pride and satisfaction of general development in harmony with the unconscious element which each contributes to the whole. The immense scale of modern enterprises, the stores of wealth which they create and demand, and the expenses attending them, have contributed, to a degree hitherto unknown, to the force of this innate attraction. This is the day of great nations. The achievements in which the age delights, as well as that kind of progress with which its hopes are associated, are possible only among them; and probably there is no blessing to mankind so great, considering how widely it is diffused, no such alleviation of the lot of humanity at the present time, as that feeling which springs from the glow of patriotism and the consciousness of membership of one of the great nations of the earth.

No example of the strength of this law of attraction has ever been presented equal to this nation of eighty years' growth. It has not only impressed a national character upon a population of different races and languages, but has shown the surrender of a national life to be impossible, except at the sacrifice of one of the dearest instincts of the heart. Not a new body only, but a new soul, has been added to the family of nations. We are at an immeasurable distance from the times when Jefferson could describe us as "one nation towards others, separate governments among ourselves." Our own experience has been added to the almost universal experience before us, to prove the continuance of such a state contrary to the laws of our social nature. The most casual acquaintance with our recent history

will disclose the perfect difference in the undercurrents of thought prevailing at the time when our government commenced its experiment and at present. Beginning in darkness and doubt, national interests and policy have insensibly conquered the first place in the estimation of the people. Although not contemplated in his philosophy, Jefferson's natural sympathies and acquired principles would have led him to observe this great change more quickly, and to regard it more profoundly, than any other of our statesmen. His was the policy of his time; its success was in the completeness with which it was adapted to existing circumstances, and in no case do his principles allow a success derived from any other source. The Constitution, to which there was at first no way open to secure the affections of the people except through the States in which their political life was centred, is now in immediate connection with them. The change has been accomplished without diminution of the personal freedom which he prized; and his authority can never be rightfully invoked in support of a construction no longer vitalized by the popular breath, and only retained as a shackle upon the movements of a free and progressive people.

ART. II. — FAITH AND SCIENCE.

THE controversy between head and heart, between letter and spirit, goes back to the days of Cain and Abel; and though happily the sanguinary fruit it then bore, in the violent suppression of the higher interest by the lower one, is no longer possible, inasmuch as the question is removed from a personal to a purely intellectual ground, still the controversy endures in unabated vigor, and demands of every candid mind its best efforts to reconcile it. Nothing, indeed, but a hope of doing this to some extent, could induce us to ask the reader's attention to the observations which follow; but whether our hope in this respect be fully vindicated to his judgment or not, we are sure he will in the end acquit us of having said anything to aggravate the existing contention.